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THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION
TO SPEAKERS OF NON-STANDARD DIALECTS
THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in English Composition


by
Ilona M. Eubank
November 1990

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ABSTRACT

The continuous lag between pedagogical theories and methodology, which has occurred with regularity to this point, has often created a mismatch between student needs and classroom practice. As a result of a deficiency in historical awareness, the use of outmoded, ineffectual methods of teaching has occurred frequently. The changing demographics of America require that writing instructors in the last decade of the 20th century be cognizant of the history of writing instruction to better meet the needs of their students.

A survey of the history of composition instruction indicates that various elements of what is now known as the collaborative model have existed and have been successful for centuries. Yet, this model continues to be "reinvented," afforded the status of "experimental," and deemed second-class to traditional models.

The result of this oversight has been particularly harmful to one group of students. These students, broadly defined as non-standard dialect speakers, have been least responsive to the dominant models, and they may have the most to gain by instruction using the collaborative model.

Acknowledgements

My attempt to become a member of the academic community and particularly the discourse community of Composition has been a two-year odyssey. However, before I was introduced to the collaborative model in academia, I had the benefit of collaborating, for nearly twenty years, with my husband, George. The success of our collaboration encouraged me to seek other areas where collaborative efforts could be beneficial. And as soon as my journey in academia began, I found the encouragement, support, and challenge that I was looking for and which I needed to do my best. I would therefore like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people for making this odyssey a wonderful reality: Milton Clark, the Brown Hornet, who never failed to gently encourage, guide, and admonish me when I needed it; Carol Haviland, for allowing me to teach in the Writing Center, and introducing me to conferences, but most of all for telling me to have faith in myself; Kevin Burne, whose mixture of orneriness and gentleness confirmed my desire to be a part of this community; Janice Kollitz, a friend, who on more than one occasion pushed me to try new things; and Greg Gilbert, a friend, mentor, and the epitome of what is good about collaborating to make meaning.

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INTRODUCTION

. . . I believe that ignorance of the history of our profession, particularly ignorance of the history of writing instruction, is the single greatest deficiency in the majority of this nation's English teachers . . . Donald C. Stewart (ix).

The medical metaphor that describes students as patients requiring the "doctoring" of omniscient instructors is out of favor. Instructors of composition do not diagnose their students' "ills" and then infuse them with broad spectrum panaceas which "cure" their errors. Modern students, like modern patients, however, are perceived as having certain rights not the least of which is to expect that those to whom they go to for professional advice (care) are well versed in their art. Unfortunately the majority of composition teachers are deficient in one area of their education--historical awareness. And I agree with Donald C. Stewart when he states that "The composition teacher[s] who [are] committed to a particular 'method' without any awareness of the historical and intellectual slot that method occupies . . . must henceforth be regarded as anachronism[s] impeding the work of an English department . . ." (xi).

Why do we need to historicize? As James Berlin comments, "The way we teach writing behavior, whether we will it or not, causes reverberations in all features of a

student's private and social behavior" (Writing 92).

Composition teachers need to know upon what foundation they are building their pedagogical houses, who built the foundations and for what purpose. We need to know what worked in the past, what didn't work, and why, so that we don't have to reinvent the wheel but can thoughtfully change the tires to fit the terrain which our students are traversing. The composition instructors that Stewart defines are anachronisms, but, unlike syndromes caused by metabolic deficiencies, they do not have to cause the "body" of composition to become terminal or even chronically ill.

The first step in diagnosis is data collection. In chapter one, I will sketch a "medical" history of the teaching of composition. Similar to a patient profile, this survey will help to apprise practitioners so that they can make informed decisions about the teaching of composition. I will analyze both the signs and symptoms, the subjective and objective data, and I will investigate the dominant models and the assumptions which guided those who used the models.

In the second chapter, I will define and analyze a model which, although never dominant, has surfaced throughout the last two centuries with only slight variations--the collaborative model. I will examine the

reasons for its staying power and the reasons for its second-class-citizen status as a pedagogical model.

In chapter three, I will acquaint you with a group of students broadly defined as non-standard dialect speakers. The dominant models have been least receptive to the needs of these students. The possible reasons for this will be the subject of this chapter.

Finally, in chapter four, I will point out that our changing views of literacy along with our changing American demographics make it reasonable if not imperative that writing instructors teach composition to speakers of non-standard dialects using a collaborative model.

A HISTORY OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

The writing of history is always a "construction."
Kathleen E. Welch (2)

For generations writing instructors have tried to respond to the exigencies of their times--political forces, social needs, and cultural mores. In spite of the vastly different circumstances in which practitioners have found themselves, similar elements have occurred in each generation. I will survey six periods of writing instruction in an attempt to define and analyze the apparent patterns.

In the middle of the fifth century B.C., Greece was a democracy and the center of a rich bed of intellectual growth; it was the hub of higher education then, and many of the ideas espoused during that time continue to affect the manner in which writing is taught today; therefore, I will first examine the Greek rhetoricians and philosophers whose work is extant (Welch 1). Naturally, in constructing history, historians and scholars view data through the cultural, socio-political and economic lenses which they themselves wear. And even though this chapter's purpose is not to ascertain the accuracy of the history which has been taught and has affected pedagogy for centuries, I must note that scholarship is gathering to highlight contributions by others who have not heretofore been noticed. Of particular

interest is Martin Bernal's work. He admonishes that "The failure of scholars since 1952 to recognize the powerful evidence linking the Philistines to the Greeks can be explained only in terms of the 19th and 20th century view of 'Philistines' as the exact opposite of the Hellenes--as enemies of culture" (250). I recognize, therefore, that I will be extrapolating information from incomplete if not inaccurate material. These are, however, the texts that shaped the history of writing instruction. And through them, as Robert Sholes points out, I will be producing a text within a text by reading, producing a text upon a text by interpreting what I have read, and producing a text against a text by criticizing those readings (24).

The earliest texts which greatly influenced composition instruction were written by three contemporaries: Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Both Isocrates and Plato were students of Socrates; both Isocrates and Aristotle were later students of Plato. It is not surprising then that the early schools of higher education used very similar teaching methods. The instructor had the position of prominence in a hierarchical structure with his students. He had a small group of pupils which he taught in lecture fashion; they practiced oral communication after studying a variety of subjects in depth; they took notes (Welch 6). Welch quotes Frederick Beck as saying that while the Sophists (one of

several classes of teachers of rhetoric) disagreed over many things "they had in common . . . [a] belief in the power of knowledge to improve human character . . ." (14). And while Isocrates railed against the Sophists' methods, he also stressed the power not only of oratory but of writing in shaping culture. Isocrates was committed to writing as a way of thinking, particularly prose writing. He wrote his orations to be read, not recited. He refers in the Antidosis to the art of discourse as "that power which, of all the faculties . . . is the source of most of our blessings" (47). He reminds his readers that "in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom" (48). Finally, in referring to Athens as the school of oratory, he writes, "the catholicity and moderation of our speech, as well as our flexibility of mind and love of letters, contribute in no small degree to the education of the orator" (51). And although most modern instructors of composition would disagree with Isocrates' statement in "Against the Sophists," that oratory requires more need for aptness, propriety, and originality than does composition, his views on the practical application of composition to daily concerns would be disputed by few (45).

In The Republic, Plato presents a desirable curriculum, and it too is associated with the health of the larger

culture and with the pursuit of knowledge. He was so desirous that the way to create harmony was education that he favored censorship (76). He referred to education as "the one great thing" and believed that it was possible to establish the ideal state through the best possible education of its citizens (114). He referred to those unable or unwilling to give up habits which were self-indulgent and which were harmful to the harmony of the state as "invalids" (117). The Academy, which he founded (the first university), was meant to be a school for philosophic statesmen. Plato taught using the conversational method of Socrates. He used his Socratic dialogues to "reach the educated public throughout the Greek world and attract pupils to the Academy" (Cornford xxvii). And Cornford insists that for both Plato and Aristotle, "Human excellence . . . is the excellence of an essentially social creature, a citizen" (xxiv). Plato's own words clearly depict the double edge to his visionary sword when he says, "They must lift up the eye of the soul to gaze on that which sheds light on all things; and when they have seen the Good itself, take it as a pattern for the right ordering of the state and of the individual, themselves included" (262).

Isocrates' insistence on the practical application of oratory and composition to daily matters is delineated still further by Aristotle. To him, rhetoric, as a mirror image

of dialectic, was a way of doing things as well as an art; it was a way to persuade and hence a practical rather than a theoretical art (Corbett vii).

Aristotle maintained the close ties between rhetoric and composition; he says, "It is a general rule that a written composition should be easy to read and therefore easy to deliver [understand]" (176); he stressed that the language used for discourse should be practical, not sublime. He defined appropriateness as that which expresses emotion and character and corresponds to the subject matter (178). He seems to be speaking of vernacular language when he states, "Each class of men, each type of disposition, will have its own appropriate way of letting the truth appear. Under 'class' I include . . . nationality [culture] . . ." (178). Clarity is achieved, according to Aristotle, by "Using the words . . . that are current and ordinary . . . People do not feel towards strangers as they do towards their own countrymen, and the same thing is true of their feeling for language" (167). He further notes that the impression of naturalness occurs as a result of the use of words from "ordinary" life (167-68).

In the final analysis, these Greek rhetoricians taught that writing should improve one's self-knowledge so that human excellence could occur. They taught that human excellence was of necessity social such that individual

improvement must be shared with society so that society would improve. What kind of language did they believe should be used? They believed language should be "easy to read," "current and ordinary," language which was appropriate to the class of people reading it. In other words, they believed that the writer should have "flexibility of mind" and "catholicity" in presentation.

In contrast, the Romans had firmly rejected eclecticism, and a standardized theory of discourse-oriented teaching was firmly entrenched by 100 B.C. They looked down on the conquered Greeks and their teachers. As an example of this attitude James Murphy quotes the Censors Domitius Aenobarbus and L. Licinius Crassus as having written the following:

Our ancestors ordained what lessons their children were to learn, and what schools they were to frequent. These new schools are contrary to our customs and ancestral traditions, and we consider them undesirable and improper (23).

The Romans favored private tutors, apprenticeships, and practical application of oratory for the ruling classes in preparation of public careers (Murphy 28).

Nonetheless, as a result of the influence of Quintillian, rhetoric and writing were more closely aligned. Quintillian's goal was "Facility," the ability to produce language which was appropriate and effective for any situation, and his method included emphasis on composition

(Murphy 19). Quintillian wrote that "writing is of the utmost importance . . . and by its means alone can true and deeply rooted proficiency [in rhetoric] be obtained" (600). However, unlike Greece, Rome was a republic and, as Howe and Harrer note, it was with reference to the education of the ruling classes that writers in the first century produced their treatises (597). Some schools were supported by taxation and others were established by the parents themselves; therefore, accountability was certainly a matter of concern to Quintillian. M.L. Clarke believes that Quintillian was "generally conservative, and where there were various views prefer[ed] to follow the commonly accepted doctrine . . ." (110). Quintillian himself is quoted as saying,

I am not a superstitious adherent of any school, and have thought it right to give my readers every opportunity of making their own choice. I have myself collected together the opinions of numerous authorities and shall be content if I am praised for industry where there is no scope for originality.
(Clarke 110)

But Clarke feels that Quintillian lacked a "sense of history." He feels that the weakness in Quintillian's pedagogy is based on the fact that he was so conservative that he failed to notice that the world had changed since the days of Cicero, whom he idolized (118). He excuses Quintillian, however, by saying that "Quintillian then was

to some extent, as most teachers no doubt are, the victims of educational tradition" (126).

The ideas espoused by Quintillian in the Institutio Oratoria (95 A.D.), whether his own or those of his contemporaries, were organized into a system of education which has been replicated for generations. He was firm concerning three points: that there is a connection between early language imitation and later learning, that learning is facilitated by enjoyment, and that writing tasks should teach ethics.

He stressed the great influence of early language imitation upon language development and subsequently on composition when he wrote, "above all else see that the child's nurse speaks correctly," and "as regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible and I do not restrict this remark to fathers alone" (598). He focused on the learner, not just on the subject, and he emphasized, in book one of the Institutio, that learning should be enjoyable. He comments that the students' studies "must be made an amusement . . ." (599). Nonetheless, he insists that education should build moral character as can be seen when he writes, "I would urge that the lines which he is set to copy, should not express thoughts of no significance but convey some sound moral lesson" (600).

As opposed to his confidence in the importance of language acquisition, the importance of teaching ethics, and the importance of making learning enjoyable, Quintillian shows ambiguity in two areas. The first is the area which would now be called cross-curricular studies. Although he pleaded for the continuance of a liberal education, such as the Greeks had, math and music weren't taught at his level (Clarke 122). Clarke quotes Quintillian as referring to cross-curricular collaboration as difficult because the other disciplines were "alien." The second area of ambiguity entails the proper subject matter for both declamation (classroom speeches) and dictation. Although Quintillian felt that the subjects chosen should be "true to life" and a preparation for actual practice, he did not approve of pupils learning from their own compositions. Murphy states that "his argument is that they might as well memorize the best authors rather than perpetuating their own errors" (42).

Even though emphasis was placed on rhetoric to the exclusion of other subjects, and student work was not overtly used as models, the Roman school system was interactive. Murphy points out that peer criticism shaped critical judgement; the students assessed each other's writing and oratory. The teacher wasn't simply a pontificator of "truth" but a dialectician who questioned

his students and tested their judgements and who asked the students to evaluate his own declamation as well (45, 63).

In contrast to the acknowledged contribution of the Greeks and the Romans to the study of composition, the contributions of the Middle Ages have been largely ignored. However, according to Marjorie Curry Woods, it was not a suspension of time where the teaching of composition is concerned. She notes that it is the longest definable period but the least addressed because researchers of the past looked at the period through improper lenses; they could not see what existed. Woods states that the lenses used were made by the Greeks. The researchers used the Greeks' definition of rhetoric as a paradigm, but the Greek paradigm was not intended for the multiplicity of social circumstances associated with the Middle Ages in Europe (77-80).

Following the numerous invasions and settlement by Germanic and other tribes, from the fifth to the tenth centuries, a time of European unity occurred. Commerce flourished. The church, although still considered the center of existence, shared prominence with the many universities and schools which fostered intellectual ferment; philosophies were exchanged and examined first hand by more than just churchmen. Texts were translated and questioned as never before; new modes of historical writing

grew, and literature in the vernacular became more prevalent. The value of personal, expressive rhetoric was demonstrated by the numerous love lyrics and courtly romances which were written.

Woods notes that during the thirteenth century Gervais of Melkley stressed the importance of realizing that different kinds of texts affect students differently. He also pointed out that certain authors instruct "directly" through example, and other authors instruct "indirectly" by citing faults of language or naming "unfitting things" (83). This awareness of individuality in learner receptivity led to a change in the teaching of rhetoric in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Woods indicates that this polarity was exhibited by a change from the chronological progression of teaching invention first, then arrangement, style, memory and finally delivery as had been done since the classical era. Rather, students began work with tropes and figures, then with exercises in memory and delivery and finally with arrangement and theoretical content (87). It is interesting, though, that the word play which was encouraged and the figuratively and sensually suggestive texts offered were intended only for the younger students.

In contrast to the younger students, Woods notes that "adult medieval discourse . . . especially scholastic

university training . . . emphasized logic and philosophy. . . . Sexuality, like textuality, was to be avoided" (92). But the older students were encouraged to rework the literary "masterpieces" by changing the organization of the material. Rather than strict chronological disposition (referred to as natural order) they might begin in medias res (artificial order); "double orders--natural and artificial--were particularly prized and emphasized during the Middle Ages" (Woods 87).

Finally, during this period of history, which began and ended in social and cultural turmoil, Woods asserts that a number of innovative ideas arose which affected teaching: (1) the real goal of teachers during this period was the passing on of a textual heritage to serve as the basis of verbal communication and creativity, (2) figurative language was acknowledged as the genesis of communication, not a decadent offshoot, (3) personal contexts informed public contexts, (4) rhetoric was based in expressive as well as persuasive communication (93).

Unlike the Medieval rhetoricians, the Renaissance rhetoricians were not particularly innovative. Surrounded by change, they seemed to take comfort in the safety of the classical manuscripts. They adored the ancients and rediscovered and critically edited numerous writings. The major goal of Renaissance Humanism was "the creation of

elegant and eloquent expression," and Erasmus, who founded the sixteenth century educational system, used Quintillian as the cornerstone of his pedagogy (Abbott 97).

Erasmus, like Quintillian, found little time for subjects other than the twin sisters of oral and written communication and their cousin literary criticism. He did concede, however, that other subjects should be taught if they furthered literary analysis. Also in keeping with the fervent regard for their classical antecedents, Latin and Greek were touted as the ultimate languages. These languages reminded the students of the glorious past enjoyed by the ancients and the power of oratory. They also could be used to aid the Europeans and the English in both commercial and philosophical exchanges. As an example of this attitude, Abbott quotes Juan Luis Vives (a protege of Erasmus) as saying, "since it is the treasury of culture and the instrument of human society, it would therefore be to the benefit of the human race that there should be a single language, which all nations should use in common" (106). Paradoxically, in trying to make their students eloquent in Latin, they used the vernacular as part of translation exercises, and an unforeseen benefit of the double translation was the enhanced abilities of the students in English composition.

Another practice which was common in antiquity and resurrected with fervor in the Renaissance was the Progymnasmata (sequentially graded exercises). These increasingly complicated imitative exercises were meant to facilitate the composing process. But theme writing did not seem to benefit from the exercises, as the following quote from John Brinsley's Ludus literarius demonstrates:

[the themes which] my children have done hereby for a long time, they have done it with exceeding paines and feare, in harsh phrase, without any inuention, judgement; and ordinarily so rudely, as I have been ashamed that anyone should see their exercises. So as it hath driuen mee into exceeding passions, causing me to deale ouer rigorously with the poore boies. (qtd. in Abbott 114)

Brinsley must have overlooked the fact that Quintillian believed learning was facilitated by enjoyment.

Finally, as in all preceding periods, the application of rhetoric was stressed. The definition of practicality was of course defined by the exigencies of the times. To the Renaissance theorists, the ability to speak well extemporaneously was a constant. Thus once again oratory was dominant. Writing, although made more practical by the technological advances of the time, was still considered only a physical activity to be used in furthering the mental activities inherent in oral expression.

On the other hand, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, writing flourished in the British Empire. As a

result of growing nationalism, journals were published, and popular sentiments were expressed in the vernacular (Horner 122). Interestingly, lectures in English literature occurred first in Scotland rather than in England. The English universities were at the time elitist, biased religiously, and very conservative. Conversely, Winfred Bryan Horner points out that "The Scottish philosophy of education was different from the English and Irish in that it was more democratic and contained few religious restrictions for admission or degrees" (131). The Scottish universities had an open door policy not unlike that instituted in the United States in the 1960's. Their courses were designed to supplement prior training and rectify any deficiencies.

One nineteenth century Scottish educator who clearly demonstrates the Scots' progressive nature was Edward Edmonstone Aytoun, who held the chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh from 1845 to 1865. He was so adamantly opposed to teaching based on the classical models that at his request the chair title was changed so that he became the Professor of English Language and Literature (Horner 133). Horner notes that Aytoun's course was integrated: English history, geography, literature, imaginative writings, as well as historical and scientific essays were taught. Furthermore, his courses included ever increasing

amounts of native literature, which was popular with his students, who paid fees directly to Aytoun to take the course.

Another innovator in Scotland was George Jardin, who taught at the University of Glasgow. Horner notes that Jardin realized that the students entering the Scottish universities were destined to fulfill a variety of stations in life, and "he urged peer evaluation, promoted writing as a way of learning, and made frequent sequenced writing assignments" (135). The subjects which he had his students write about were "numerous and various." He also objected to mechanical note taking, preferring instead that students engage with the lecture in progress and then compose their thoughts and impressions afterward.

While also a Scot, Alexander Bain lies in stark contrast to Aytoun and Jardin. Bain's attitudes and methods mirrored those of his English counterparts at both Oxford and Cambridge. He considered his students immature as well as ill-prepared, and he viewed their dialects as "ruricisms." "He felt strongly that the way to good English, written and spoken, was primarily through a knowledge of grammar, which he conscientiously drilled into his students" (Horner 147). Need I add that Horner notes that he was a terribly unpopular teacher of composition and rhetoric?

Other than the exceptions noted above, the educational system in Great Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries continued firm in the belief that upward mobility was enhanced by education, that standardization in language was rational, and that Latin was the measuring stick for perfection. In spite of these attitudes, Latin was eventually replaced by the vernacular for practical use. The shift started with lawyers and government officials and then affected literature; as more people became literate in the vernacular, more writers arose to supply them with something to read. In other words, political and socioeconomic factors rather than pedagogical theories instigated the shift toward the vernacular. It was essentially a case of supply and demand.

In America, classical languages were brought with the early settlers and reigned in the educational setting for over a century. Harvard's attempt to blackball the use of classical languages in literary and debate societies in the second half of the eighteenth century graphically demonstrates both their widespread use and the contempt for the practice (Halloran 153). The role played by these societies in fostering collaborative writing will be further explored in the chapter on collaboration. I mention them here, however, as they are an example for one of the two phases which resulted in the conversion from classical

oratorical pedagogy to vernacular compositional writing pedagogy.

In the first phase, which occurred primarily in the eighteenth century, English replaced Latin as the primary medium of instruction. At first, only the less capable students were given assignments in English, and dialects were not singled out as unacceptable. The concept of "correct" English had not been invented. But two of the foremost rhetoricians of the time, Witherspoon and Blair, were in favor of classical models, and Witherspoon, who was particularly interested in eloquence, is credited by Halloran with coining the term "Americanism" as a put down for the colloquialisms which colored the language at the time (166-67). By the nineteenth century, "correct" English was a sign of membership in the upper class; composition instructors emphasized usage and grammar.

Even though Halloran notes that relevant topics were assigned which should have engaged the interest of the students of that time, a student diary indicates lack of enthusiasm in writing themes (157). There are several factors which could account for this apparent preference of oratory over composition; however, only one--audience--accounts for the fact that students not only enjoyed their in-class orations better than their compositions, but also prompted them to join writing groups as well as debate

societies. Approval for orations came from the entire class, the entire debate or literary society, or even the entire college. The compositions written for the writing associations also received the groups' constructive criticism and approval, while the compositions written for class had only one person as audience. Halloran notes that the work was neither graded nor done in the context of credit hours; therefore, audience approval mattered a great deal, and the opinion of an instructor or tutor was not as highly regarded as the opinions of a group of one's peers. Robert J. Connors stresses this point as well by stating, "the idea began to circulate in composition classes that a writer's job was to please a reader. It seems strange to us, but the concept of writing interestingly for an audience was not brought out strongly by composition texts until after 1885" (176).

The second phase of the conversion from classical oratorical to vernacular compositional pedagogy--the change from orality to silent prose--took place primarily in the nineteenth century. Persuasive rhetoric made room for the belletristic forms of writing (poetry, fiction, drama, and essay). The importance of eloquence and culturally sanctioned commonplaces gave way to an emphasis on private experience and the promotion of the appreciation for multiple styles--the ideal of taste (Halloran 163-64).

Robert J. Connors further asserts that "taste and criticism as components of rhetoric reflect[ed] the increased appreciation for sentiment and personality as elements of life" (169). Instructors gradually began to encourage a shift from the "high style" to the "language really used by men" (Connors 170).

As in Great Britain, social and economic factors necessitated changes in pedagogy; the rise of the middle class required changes in the classroom. There were dramatic increases in enrollment when the middle class ethos that "everyone has a right to rise socially and economically" took hold (Halloran 165), and methods were required to "sort" students. Written exams fit the bill.

Both the increases in school enrollment and in the middle class along with the exigencies of the Industrial Revolution promoted a rise in the number of professionals. According to Halloran, the practical goal of the nineteenth century was to prepare professionals to write expository and argumentative prose free from passion or morality. The culture valued the professional as a new ideal replacing Quintillian's citizen orator (167). The rhetoricians of the time were dealing with a democracy whose specialized knowledge was rapidly advancing. The pressing need of how to relate these changes to the every day purposes of life became a significant goal. Yet, for the most part, Halloran

believes that the study of rhetoric was not valued as it had been during the neoclassical period (eighteenth century) because "there [was] little effort to develop a historical context or probe underlying principles, and no sense that the subject [was] intellectually challenging and socially important" (175). As a result, Berlin feels that one rhetoric was deemed important--a rhetoric of success--and it insisted on the language of a particular class. Thus, visual metaphors (outlining, diagramming etc.) were formed by some theorists to account for a linear, component upon component, mechanistic approach to replicating sentence, paragraph and theme structures (Writing 82-84).

However, another view of reality was offered during the nineteenth century by Fred Newton Scott and his student Gertrude Buck, a view that had its roots in the social orientation of Plato. They stressed that reality was a social construction, and they focused not only on assignments but also on the writers of the assignments. Besides responding to the total student--ethically, aesthetically, and rationally--they made assignments which were meant to offer a complete rhetorical situation. The assignments grew out of the writer's purpose, role, and audience. James Berlin comments that the alternative view espoused by Scott and Buck was a reaction against scientific epistemology and its class bias and was grounded in

Emersonian pragmatism (Writing 77). To Emerson, the rhetor must be at the center of political and social action. That notion, and the realization that a multiplicity of dialects existed in America, led Scott to call for the right of students to use their own language and the importance of validating this right. He professes that "Language is experience; to deny the validity of a person's dialect is to deny the reality of that person's experience and, finally, the reality of the person herself" (Rhetoric 48).

So many changes have occurred in the twentieth century that Stephen North refers to reform as "one of the hallmarks of American education" (11). Ideas emerged in precipitous births, in decades rather than in centuries. During this creative period, composition as an outgrowth of the field of rhetoric became an academic field in its own right, and numerous rhetorics sprang up to vie for dominance in explaining the purpose and process of written discourse. As the epistemological seed beds of the preceding generations were groomed, cuttings were taken, and hybrids were developed to meet the needs of this century, three categories have grown to dominate both theory and practice: objective, subjective, and transactional. After briefly summing up the essence of each, I will note the contexts which nurtured or hindered their growth.

My primary source will be Berlin's text, Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985, which I found particularly helpful, even though I found an incongruity which was disconcerting. Berlin feels that "the plurality of competing rhetorics is always related to the plurality of competing ideologies," (4) yet he attempts to downplay ideology as a basis for taxonomy. He claims that the term "ideology" is negatively connotated to mean doctrine. I do not feel the necessity to avoid the word "ideology." It is apparent, in looking at the history of rhetoric, that the dominant body of integrated assertions, theories and aims of the socio-political group which is in power determines, to a large degree, what is taught and how it is taught. It would be unnatural to attempt to separate rhetoric from its socio-political or economic context. This is not to say that I disagree with Ann E. Berthoff's claim that "pedagogy always echoes epistemology" (11), only that I recognize that epistemologies echo the contexts from which they grow.

The longest lived epistemological category grew from an objective view of reality. This view insists that reality is external and should be represented by accurate copying skills (positivistic). Its major offshoot is the current-traditional method which emphasizes a scientific approach to composition by stressing modes of discourse, especially

exposition. Harvard was the vanguard of this view, which arose in the nineteenth century. It was meant to be efficient, practical, and utilitarian for the upwardly mobile managerial classes--the rhetoric of success mentioned above. It continues to be popular to those who profess that language is meant to "demonstrate the individual's qualifications as a reputable observer . . . [and] it must conform to certain standards of usage, thereby demonstrating the appropriate class affiliation" (9).

In opposition to this stance, Yale promoted what came to be viewed as a subjective epistemology, one which sees reality as internally apprehended. Grounded in idealism and expressionism, adherents felt that if an environment was provided that was conducive to arriving at truth, an individual would be capable of discerning it. Self-fulfillment and advancement of culture were stressed over efficiency. Some of the activities engaged in by followers of this epistemology included keeping a journal, searching for original metaphors, and participation in peer editorial groups (13). But while this view seems tolerant of individuality, Berlin notes,

Liberal culture was an ideal based on a tacit social and moral code as well as on an aesthetic creed. Most proponents were Anglophiles who favored class distinctions and aspired to the status of an educated aristocracy of leadership and privilege . . . (45)

This was hardly a tolerant view.

The third epistemological category is the transactional. The proponents of this category viewed reality as a point of interaction between the writer, the subject being written about, the language used, and the audience. Besides Scott and Buck mentioned above, philosopher-educator-psychologist John Dewey embodied this rhetoric. He insisted that learning was a process which formality of structure would retard and that authoritarian methods in the schools would not prepare students for citizenship in a democracy. The ideological assumptions which Dewey voiced evolved into the Progressive Education Movement.

Although progressive education offered optimism to America after WWI, "the optimistic faith in the possibility that all institutions could be reshaped to better serve society . . ." (58), the current-traditional rhetoric continued to be the most common approach from 1920-1940. It offered the assurance that the study of language and literature was "a way to instill a sense of national heritage and to encourage patriotism" (56). But after the Depression, the concern of the progressives for social reform was quite strong. Many educators could see that composition was a social act, and a rhetoric of public discourse similar to the Aristotelian model ensued (81). With input from subjectivists, the following innovations

were added to curriculums: editorial groups, workshop approaches (laboratories) which stressed nondirective teaching, and student chosen topics. One of the most popular textbooks of the 20's and 30's refers to the changed role for instructors. Berlin quotes its author, Adele Bildersee, as saying, "The part the teacher can play in this process is that of guide and adviser--collaborator, if need be" (77). Whether as a carry-over from the efficiency movement or out of intellectual curiosity, a study was begun in 1936 to determine the superiority among several approaches. After one year, the current-traditional approach was defined as an approach of "obvious inferiority" to the "experimental" approach. The "experimental" approach included student papers presented to the group each week for response, no textbook or drill in mechanics, and teacher participation as respondent rather than lecturer (83-84).

Although the current-traditional method was strengthened as a result of WWII, once again seeming to be a safeguard of the American way of life, it subsumed parts of progressive education, namely attention to social values (93-94). Great emphasis on communications during these decades drew attention to the value of an integrated curriculum (collaboration between instructors of different disciplines) and student collaboration. This milieu resulted in the so-called communications course. It was

"designed to emphasize cooperative rather than competitive thinking, working in this way toward a 'world state' that would avert the onset of another war . . ." (101).

But regardless of its apparent pragmatism, the communications course was doomed. A combination of educational and national politics joined to topple its short-lived glory. Educationally, it threatened departmental autonomy as well as causing rifts within English departments over funding. Consequently, since monies were scarce, and because instructors of literature could boast a role in preserving culture and in safeguarding the individual thinker from group domination, the communications course languished. As Berlin notes, the supposed ability of literature to rid "the individual of any impulses which might be counter to existing political arrangement . . ." garnered funds (111).

Following the repressive effects of the 1950's, a seeming chaos of methodologies sprung up to respond to the various social, economic, and political exigencies of the first half of this century. A tide of ideas crested, culminating in dialogue and dialectical interplay that has not ceased. And although composition was elevated to a discipline in the 1960's, the elements which had surfaced, since antiquity, as being of greatest import to citizens and most readily instilled and refined by the art of discourse,

were not addressed thoroughly by any of the major epistemological categories. The categories, instead, proved to be generative agents among themselves, and in the 1970's the difference between them became less clear-cut.

The common element which surfaced was the social nature of writing. As North puts it, "If Composition's short modern history teaches us nothing else, it is that, as one of the traditional three 'Rs, 'ritin' tends to be far more vulnerable to non-academic influences than most other academic fields" (375). The objectivists began to emphasize "the social nature of writing by teaching composing within a social environment" (Berlin Rhetoric 144). The subjectivists assumed that by "Enabling individuals to arrive at self-understanding and self-expression they will inevitably lead to a better social order" (155). The transactionalists believed that "The individual's environment can play as important a role as the inherent make up of the mind" (159).

During the late 60's and early 70's, a pedagogical model was advanced as an alternative to both the subjectivist and objectivist rhetorics. It was the first model to establish the importance of the triad of intellectual, rhetorical, and social elements which had heretofore only been addressed in a random fashion. In chapter two, I will look at what has been called

collaborative learning as a model for the twenty-first century.

THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL

All that is new in collaborative learning it seems, is the systematic application of collaborative principles to that last bastion of hierarchy and individualism, the American college classroom. Kenneth Bruffee (647)

One of the first classroom settings in which collaborative principles were used, in a concerted effort for an extended period of time, occurred in 1861, at the Yasnaya Polyana school in Russia. I chose not to mention it in Chapter One to dramatize the fact that the effects of this important piece of research were not addressed until nearly one hundred years after its occurrence. How could such an oversight happen? At least two factors worked against the successful transmission of Tolstoy's pedagogy to others in the field: a connection was not made with a theory of knowledge which would explain it, and his methodology was not clearly defined so that others might attempt to apply it. In defining the collaborative model and its evolution since Yasnaya Polyana, I will attempt to show that a connection between a theory of knowledge and collaborative practice exists.

At Yasnaya Polyana, Leo Tolstoy founded a school for peasant children in which forty students were taught twelve subjects at three levels with the assistance of four teachers. The school was viewed as a living organism in constant change (87). Tolstoy referred to it as a "class

[which] educated itself" (126). Students initiated board work, dictation and transcription, and small group work occurred daily. The students chose their own essay subjects from actual events and stories with which they were familiar (133). And Tolstoy, the most famous Russian writer at that time, did not teach them writing but instead modeled the process by writing along side them. He explained his thoughts and the choices he was making. He then challenged and encouraged them to do likewise. He says succinctly, "And it was as if we did not give in to one another, but were equal writers" (215).

Was the method successful? Well, they didn't have SETE's in those days, but on one occasion Tolstoy was absent from the school and the students continued to come and work together on a collaborative composition. Although attendance was not compulsory, most students attended all seven classes each day from early morning until after dark during the two years that the school was open. Tolstoy remarks, "we had evidently chanced to hit upon the approach which was more natural and more stimulating than all the previous ones" (230).

In a magazine which Tolstoy published to disseminate his findings and solicit comments from fellow educators, he included several examples of student writing; they clearly demonstrated quality in content, style, and form as judged

by Tolstoy as well as other educators of the time. However, detractors of Tolstoy's methodology questioned whether the quality of the students' written products weren't unduly influenced by Tolstoy himself; Tolstoy retorted that collaborative learning--a climate devoid of coercion, memorization at the exclusion of other developmental skills, and senseless reading--would produce student texts of mature quality (278).

Tolstoy's experiment was at once a success and a failure. It succeeded locally for several years, but it failed to be replicated throughout Russia. It failed to inform the educational systems of Europe or America during the nineteenth century. Was Tolstoy surprised by this turn of events? I don't think so. In almost prophetic terms he wrote, "It will take at least a hundred years for all the ready-made institutions--schools, gymnasia, universities--to die out, and then freely formed institutions will grow, having as their basis freedom for the generation that is studying" (325). Why did Tolstoy believe that so much time would pass before a "freely formed" (collaborative) model would be accepted? The reigning concept of knowledge was unquestionably positivistic, and the political, social, and economic milieus favored pedagogy based on authoritarian models.

To return to my introductory medical metaphor, like the systems of the human body, the members of the body of Composition have been striving for homeostasis. They have been seeking that equilibrium among each other which would guarantee health to the field. They have been responsive to the climate of the community. And equalizing forces, themselves responses to stimuli, always take time to bear fruit. Even if immediate change would be more beneficial for the organism, it is generally not possible. Change is usually slow to come about.

In this imperfect analogy that I have been trying to set up, one element has nearly a one-to-one correspondence. While all systems are important to the functioning of the body, one system is essential for the life of the organism, and one organ of that system plays the gate-keeper function. For the body, this organ is literally the brain; for education--research and practice--the philosophy of knowledge adhered to by the majority becomes the gate-keeper for all the homeostatic juggling that occurs in methodology. In other words, collaborative methodology has been a second-class citizen as a result of its close ties with a heretofore unacceptable philosophy of knowledge. Its efficacy alone was never enough for it to become the dominant method. Its rise in popularity was subsequent to its connection with a philosophy which is now tenable--

social constructionism. Therefore, in attempting to piece together the quilt of collaborative learning, an awareness of the bias threads of social constructionist philosophy will be essential.

Contemporaries, psychologist Lev Vygotsky and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, formulated theories which, had they been available to Tolstoy, would have strengthened his pedagogical position. They laid the cornerstone for social constructionism. James Wertsch tells us that Vygotsky posited the social dimension of consciousness, that it is "a product of society" (60, 63). Furthermore, in Vygotsky's view, there are "zones of proximal development," regions of sensitivity in which learning potential is enhanced by collaboration (qtd. by Wertsch 67-68). Vygotsky's position, that higher mental processes have their origin in social processes, subsequently led to the social constructionist assumption that "Entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on [are] community-generated and community maintained linguistic entities . . ." (Bruffee Social Construction 774).

To Bakhtin, language is sociohistorically specific, and reality is a construct of speech. Speech, for Bakhtin, is determined by the internalized voices to which the speaker is exposed. Ann Ruggles Gere traces Bakhtin's logic in this manner: words occur in outer experience which is organized

socially; conceptual frameworks are a result of relationships between speakers and listeners; therefore, words come from dialogue not dictionaries (87). This view of reality is diametrically opposed to the positivistic view of reality as something out there which the mind's eye reflects through language. And while the positivist philosophy reinforces atomistic performance in writing, "from the Vygotsky-Bakhtin perspective . . . , peer response plays an essential part in writing because this exchange contributes to the continuing dialogue between individual writers and their society" (Gere 87).

I don't want to give the impression that only nineteenth and twentieth century Russians contributed to the evolution of objectivist epistemology into social constructionist pedagogy, even though their contribution was seminal. Also significant were other contributors such as John Dewey, whose input to the Progressive Education Movement, as mentioned earlier, promoted thoughts regarding "democratic methods" such as consultation, negotiation, and co-operative intelligence (Dewey 175). The humanists stressed not only the powers of reasoning but the importance of teaching ethics. The social meliorists fostered cooperation and intelligent democracy so that social progress might be enjoyed by all. The developmentalists,

while acknowledging individual differences, highlighted the need for feedback from others (Gere 21-23).

Before educators were receptive to the theories noted above and the above noted theories had time to germinate and then bear fruit which could be analyzed, peers tutored each other. In spite of teachers who viewed student collaboration as "cheating," peers provided a friendly, supportive audience for each other, and they continued "helping" each other. The advantages of peer collaboration leads Mary Deming to call for structured peer tutoring as "a method of instruction so diversified and so comprehensive that it can be used for all groups of people, for all purposes . . ." (23). If peer collaboration is natural, why must it be taught? What are the advantages of students teaching students?

Gen Ling Chang and Gordon Wells explain that in order for "collaborative talk" to occur on a consistent basis with maximum results, it must be taught. They define "collaborative talk" as that talk which fosters the growth of critical reflectiveness, which in turn enhances the potential for the development of literate thinking (26). "Collaborative talk" includes use of communication skills such as active listening, open-ended questions, repetition, and summary (Meyer 27-38). It requires an awareness of the importance of ownership in problem solving. Collaborators

must not take ownership away from each other, whether in tutorial or small group settings in an effort to "help" each other achieve a product. Yet, as Vygotsky posited, a shared understanding of the task (intersubjectivity) is necessary to carry out effective communication (Wertsch 157); collaborators must themselves have struggled to compose. They must perceive the value of all stages of the writing process as relevant to disciplined thinking and as strategies for achieving the intention of the writer in light of the exigency of the assignment.

Deming notes a number of advantages for both students and teachers stemming from the use of peer tutoring. These advantages can be subsumed under one of three categories: psycho-social, cognitive, and managerial. The psycho-social advantages include decreased anxiety over demographic differences between members, development of bonds of friendship with resultant increased motivation, and effectiveness especially with learners who have aversion to authority figures. The cognitive advantages are that tutors learn to teach and increase their own understanding of the concepts being taught, and the tutees learn to make and reorganize knowledge more effectively as a result of their enhanced awareness of audience. The managerial advantage is that it is time efficient. The instructor will have time

to individually address problems through conferencing which otherwise would not have been addressed.

Another instance where laypeople perceived the value of collaboration and made use of it before professionals is in writing groups. Writing groups, variously titled mutual-improvement societies, literary societies, movements, and clubs, have been a visible and easily recognizable form of collaborative learning since the colonial period. But from their inception, members had two things in common: an egalitarian view of knowledge and an impulse toward joining with others to initiate changes (Gere 33).

The largest and most successful mutual improvement group was the Lyceum Movement, founded in 1826; it grew to 3000 branches by 1834 (Gere 35). The Lyceum groups, like other non-institutional groups, were nonhierarchical; authority was vested in the members equally. Members usually came from the same socioeconomic backgrounds, often having the same occupations, leading to a combination of friendship and respect (Gere 51). Besides the difficult-to-document qualitative benefits of self-satisfaction, increased self-esteem, decreased sense of anxiety about writing and speaking, and increased sense of solidarity with other members, to name a few, members of groups are credited with quantifiable results of membership. These include publication and increased civic activity, including making

recommendations for improvement of writing instruction in local schools. The American Library Association notes that women's club members were responsible for initiating 75% of the public libraries (Gere 44). Surely this is a demonstrative example of what Karen Burke LeFevre speaks of as the quality of "resonance." She states that when groups of adults collaborate they achieve more as a result of this reverberation of ideas than they could otherwise (78).

Writing groups which are structured (institutional) tend to be referred to as writing workshops and were initially associated only with "creative" writing classes. However, one group, the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP), was established in 1974 with the purpose of having teachers collaborate to write not only imaginative pieces but research papers. Following the workshop, they train teachers in their own districts. I should note, though, that the program is geared to elementary and secondary teachers and that although 300,000 teachers attended the various satellite projects within the first five years, they accounted for only 15% of that population (Gere 30).

Yet, the interaction between the directors from the sponsoring universities, their facilitators, and the participant practitioners could be important in promoting collaborative principles. For instance, the philosophical stance of the Inland Area Writing Project (IAWP), which I

had the privilege of attending as a facilitator in 1989, closely resembled Whole Language Theory as delineated by Judith M. Newman in Whole Language. It was an example of theory in practice as the seasoned university professor, the graduate students of composition and the K-12 instructors explored the joys of making meaning in collaboration, and they all enjoyed it. In that instance I would have concurred with Elliot Eisner's quote in Whole Language that "what pupils learn is not only a function of the formal and explicit content that is selected; it is also a function of the manner in which it is taught" (Newman 3). And I think all participants in that year's project would agree with the following statement by Newman: "The most important thing that we learned is that writing is an intensely social activity" (124).

Structured writing groups, such as the IAWP, differ in only two ways from unstructured groups: origins of authority and matter of convening. At best, structured groups will only be semi-autonomous because authority originates in the instructor or the director. In structured groups attendance is usually mandatory. Even though they both highlight the social dimension of writing, offer immediate response to writing and reduce the distance between writer and audience, Gere elucidates the differences by noting that initially, in structured groups, there is no affinity between members; it

must develop. And if grades are given there will always be a hierarchical relationship rather than a "web of relationships" as in unstructured groups.

In the IAWP a number of tasks were performed. Both freewrites and topic specific texts were assigned. When the members felt comfortable, texts were read aloud. We progressed from simply sharing our work to requesting specific feedback and then to being comfortable enough to give and take unsolicited criticism. Finally, being comfortable with the tasks involved in collaborative behavior, we produced group texts. The Whole Language approach is very integrative, and we wrote in a variety of genres and were taught and "played" with techniques which drew from content across the curriculum. The sequencing of activities to foster self-confidence and build trust in the group in turn promoted the giving and receiving of authority which decreased the two primary obstacles to the positive functioning of writing groups: alienation and egocentricity.

Gere feels that alienation leads to a feeling of isolation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness (62). Maxine Greene notes that alienation can be caused just as much by the incapacity to read/speak the "texts of [our] lived lives" as can physical abandonment, absence of community or the erosion of concern (476).

The second obstacle, egocentricity, leads to inattention to audience. When writers ignore audience, two things probably will happen. First, they will not give as much of themselves to the process and will consequently receive less in return. Second, their writing will have errors in content and structure, including faulty logic, incoherence, poor transitions, and absent or faulty punctuation (Gere 67). However, when the connection is made that language is socially generated, cooperative behavior, enhanced feedback and collaborative learning probably will occur. Thus the connection between language and knowledge making improves the products.

Beverly T. Watkins, in her article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, quotes William R. Whipple, who oversees Collaboration in Undergraduate Education (CUE), as stating that there were fewer than one hundred institutions using collaborative methods in 1980, while in 1989 there were more than 450 (A12). This is phenomenal growth. Nonetheless Robert E. Slavin informs us that methodological research began in the 1920's, research on cooperation in grades K-12 began in 1929 (3), and in 1949 a research project at the college level found that cooperation among peers would obtain better results than competitiveness (111). This is not to indicate that cooperative learning is synonymous with collaborative learning. However, whether one views

cooperative learning as being parallel to collaborative learning, as Lunsford and Ede do (116-18), or as an element of collaborative learning as I do, clearly the positive findings of cooperative learning research have not been acknowledged by practitioners at the college level. This may be one reason why Bruffee's statement, that universities have been slow in utilizing collaborative methods, is true.

If achievement, as measured by high scores on standardized tests, is not the only important outcome of schooling and if pro-social behaviors are increasingly needed in our society because the ability to get along with each other is more and more crucial, then collaborative experiences must be created. If Frederick Erickson is right when he states that non-collaborative teaching distorts teaching and inhibits learning (431) because of its inherent absence of dialogue secondary to the hierarchical structure it fosters and its continued focus on surface skills rather than on the construction of meaning, then what Beyer calls "dualism" will continue to grow from the educational system. And "dualism" promotes inequality in society and alienation in education (268). But Patricia Bizzell believes that if students want to enter into the academic discourse community, they must learn to negotiate between the social practices of their native discourse community and the social practices of the academic discourse community (2). Most

adherents of social constructionist philosophy agree that it is good for students to master academic discourse. Can positive outcomes be demonstrated in increased achievement as well as social interaction? How is this negotiation accomplished?

Regarding positive outcomes, researchers have found that there are basically three factors which affect the outcome of any instructional system: structures, motives, and behaviors. A task structure is the way activities are set up. Incentive structures are the motivations built into the system, such as grades, feedback, etc., while cooperative motives are personality variables, i.e., a predisposition to cooperate. Cooperative behaviors, as opposed to individualistic or competitive behaviors, are those visible demonstrations of the use of cooperative skills such as the sharing of ideas and information, praising and encouraging, and checking on the comprehension of others (Slavin 1-6, Lew 478).

In cooperative methods, where both positive goal interdependence and positive reward interdependence exist, a "chain of causality" occurs. Peer norms support learning, with subsequent increases in individual motivation to achieve and to help others achieve (Lew 477-78, Slavin 65). This is, of course, quite the contrary in the "negative dependence" situations, the kind students encounter in many

traditional classrooms, where one must fail for another to succeed. Group study is not the same thing as cooperative learning. Slavin found that higher order mental concepts increased most with the use of task specialization coupled with peer tutoring, not simply with the unstructured gathering of students. I can think of two ways to accomplish the joining of positive goal and reward interdependence, although I'm sure there are more. In one scenario, a writing task would have several subtasks. Students in a group would each have a task, such as a segment of library or field research which they would work on independently and then present in group discussion. In this way the students would share in the "circularity or dialectic characteristic of all critical study . . ."

(Berthoff 4). In my second scenario, a hybrid of the Read Around Groups (RAGS) that I learned last year in the IAWP and Peter Elbow's method, students would discuss an issue. One student would take notes and write a draft about the discussion. He/she would read it to the group in the next class. They would discuss it, and another student would revise the first paper adding the new input. This could go through several drafts until the entire group edited it for submission to the teacher (125). Note that the students can only achieve the goal if all the students cooperate, and the

students will receive the same reward for the successful completion of the joint task.

In order to activate support for collaborative learning tasks, students must have a part in designing the task. Tasks need to be interesting to the students and be perceived as valuable. Each member's contribution must be acknowledged and rewards for effort must be given. Time must be taken to teach the peer tutoring and collaborative learning skills (Slavin 17, Erickson 436). Role playing or demonstrations of the processes can be staged or a video might be shown. I have used the video Student Writing Groups: Demonstrating the Process with some success in several writing classes.

If you were to walk into a collaborative classroom, the chances are that it would appear disordered. At least I would hope it would. But what you would observe would be what Ann Berthoff calls "the power of chaos" (42) and Peter Elbow calls a "creative mess" (142). The students would be negotiating meaning within context. Depending on the stage of the class, students might be collaboratively learning a heuristic such as cubing. They might be laughing or seeming to all talk at the same time because in fact each group is at a different point in their negotiations. The tables and chairs would certainly not be in neat rows. Collaboration is hard to do when everyone is facing forward. Perhaps you

would wonder if you hadn't walked into a sociology classroom as apparent "social" skills were being discussed. But as Berthoff mentions, "these so called 'social skills' are taught in the context of actual conversation because it is recognized that they are acts of interpretation, ways of making meaning" (26). The conversation between class members and between instructor and class members teaches students that ideas must be qualified for an audience. They also learn the importance of dealing with different points of view and how one's point of view comes across to a real audience. I think Margaret Tebo-Messina sums up the value of this negotiation to composition students when she states that the goal is intellectual independence through free and open conversation, which makes obvious diversity of response a central attribute in collaborative writing classrooms (88).

A viable connection exists, at the theoretical level, between social constructionism and collaborative learning. Collaborative elements have also been defined by practitioners, and application of the principles of this model have been "tested" in a variety of settings. In chapter three, I will investigate the application of this model to a specific group of learners.

NON-STANDARD DIALECT SPEAKERS

. . . despite 20 years of sociolinguistic investigation concerned with identification of specific structural differences between standard and a variety of non-standard dialects, remarkably few implications for schooling practice have been discovered. Kelleen Toohey (127)

In chapter two, I drew an analogy between medical misdiagnosis, based on overlooked information (by patient or diagnostician), and the failure by theorists and practitioners to acknowledge, in a timely fashion, contributions which could have given health to our field. In this chapter, I will examine those students whom the educational system has failed to see even as educators attempted to analyze these students "deficient" language. By analogy let me offer a few medical scenarios that might serve to illustrate how this happened. First scenario (you've probably seen this one on television): the patient is lying in her bed. A group of doctors (actually one and several interns) enter the room. They commence discussing the "case"--not the patient. They leave. Second scenario (this happened to me while I was a patient): a nurse proceeds to perform an invasive procedure based on data given to her by the preceding shift. She never even asks for patient input which would demonstrate that the procedure was unnecessary. Third scenario: a doctor and nurse enter the room. The patient has undergone surgery, and the doctor

intently scrutinizes the wound. The patient's facial expression indicates anxiety and apprehension; the doctor never sees it.

A large group of students have been overlooked by the diagnosticians and practitioners in our field. Who are these students who have been overlooked? While different in many ways, they have two things in common: they are from working-class and/or minority families, and their oral, home language is a dialect of English. They are speakers of Gullah or folk speech; they are American Indian students and Hispanic students; they are speakers of Black English Vernacular. These are the students for whom the melting-pot metaphor does not work. And Beth Daniell states, "Current unemployment, welfare, and prison statistics ought to make clear the disparity between social reality and the traditional ideals of equal opportunity for minority and working-class children; i.e., nonstandard speakers" (501).

The scope of this chapter can neither adequately address the continued labeling of certain dialects as "low prestige" (Cleary 61) and their users as members of "socially disadvantaged speech communities" (Grimshaw 32) nor present a linguistic analysis of the features of various dialects which would demonstrate their rules and the logic governing them. It will attempt to demonstrate that non-standard dialect speakers require instruction vastly

different from the traditional. As Allan Ornstein and Daniel Levine stress, "Differential instructional approaches appropriate for teaching students with differing ethnic and racial backgrounds are a key to developing effective approaches for multicultural education" (241).

If the history of Composition has taught us anything, it is that attempts at eradicating the use of vernacular speech has been a failure. It is not surprising, then, that most linguists are proponents of a pluralist or bidialectical position (Taylor 36, Sato 260, Labov 241). And while Geneva Smitherman feels that bidialectism causes schism in the black personality (173), James Sledd notes that there is no real opposition to the teaching of standard English but to teaching it in the wrong ways for the wrong reasons (172). Moreover regardless of the arbitrariness which ensconced standard English as the language of those in power, it is as Sledd notes, "the most useful all-purpose dialect we have" (173). Therefore, to facilitate dialects and attempt to exclude standard English from our teaching of composition would do a disservice to dialect speakers.

The bidialectic approach facilitates code switching (changing registers according to contexts). That it is done frequently by most educated, socialized adults would seem to prove Ronald Baker's comment that such variations in language use are natural (92). But to those whose home

language has been ignored at best and invalidated at worst by the traditional composition pedagogy, code switching has been undesirable and unmanageable (Foster 137). That there is "sociolinguistic competence as well as linguistic competence in using language" (Baker 93) has not been taught to most students. Judith Nembhard offers Howard University as a notable exception. Howard's predominantly black student body are taught bidialectically. They write frequently in class and utilize peer editing to bridge the gap between home language and standard dialect. She notes that the program has been a great success in improving black students writing competencies as well as retaining their self-esteem (80).

How can students be taught bidialectically? What aspects of language use are most helpful for classroom learning? Although, ultimately, both elements of the instructional system must be attended to (task structure and task incentive), Robert Slavin asserts, "If students are not motivated to learn, the particular task structure being used will make little difference" (1). In order to motivate non-standard dialect speakers to achieve constructive pluralism, Elaine Wangberg notes that a language experience approach, which permits the close matching of students' language and experiences with reading material, should be undertaken (306). Her sentiments are echoed by Charlene Sato who calls

for "culturally congruent participation structures" (273). Oral language must serve as the springboard for non-standard dialect speakers into the realm of written discourse. As Richard L. Wright notes, "members of lower-class and working class groups place a premium on oral language that encodes and asserts group identity and group loyalty" (7). Slavin concurs by pointing out that research "consistently support[s] the observation that blacks (and possibly Chicanos as well) gain outstandingly in 'cooperative learning'" (61). And Dennis R. Craig points out that non-standard dialect speakers are not learning standard English because they do not perceive its relevancy to their social needs (67). He concludes that they place a premium on the oral use of language because of its relevancy to their daily lives, and they tend to make progress in cooperative settings. Recognition of the relationship between cultural identity and language should therefore, as Joseph Leibowicz intimates, clear away obstacles to these students' success (90). Yet this is not happening in traditional classrooms. Why?

The structure of traditional classrooms puts a premium on orderliness and atomistic working conditions. Not only is the non-standard dialect speaker's language invalidated by the lack of prose models indicating quality writing by dialect speakers, and the students' own compositions

continuously "corrected," but their most valued form of communication is nullified. Labov notes that "asymmetrical situations" arise in which the students perceive that anything they might say will be used against them (206). Smitherman refers to the phenomenon which occurs as non-standard speakers try to fit into our current system as one of "double consciousness" (11). She states that a "push/pull" ambivalence occurs between the system's unrelenting demand for standard usage and the students natural affinity to use the language with which they are comfortable (12). Their home language has proved relevant and has contributed to their identity; they are good at it. But it is devalued by those in control of the educational system, the gatekeeper which promises upward mobility to those who follow its prescribed guidelines. The role of the self-consciousness which ensues cannot be overstated as a causative agent for the failure of dialect speakers to succeed in becoming fluent at standard English composition.

Several Composition theorists note the importance of establishing a transitional community between the student's home language and academic discourse (Trimbur 604, Rose 47-8). The further the home dialect is from the target dialect in social acceptability, the more likely that an environment needs to be created which will encourage group work in which the home dialect is valued and "mistakes" made while

navigating the mine fields between home and target dialect are seen as acceptable, even good (Roy 439-40). The following comment by John Trimbur may clarify the dynamics of such an environment:

Through collective investigation of difference, students can begin to imagine ways to change the relations of production and to base the conversation not on consensus but on reciprocity and the mutual recognition of the participants and their differences. (614)

A rather unique example of "changing the relations of production" is offered by Delores K. Schriner and William C. Rice. They used computer conferencing at the University of Michigan to encourage students to negotiate their individual voices into collective conversation. Schriner and Rice found that the students took increasing responsibility for their own education as their comfort with exchanges increased. They also found that unity among members increased and the students generated an average of fifty pages of text in addition to what was required for class assignments (473). They concluded with this assessment, "clearly computer conferencing integrates school life with life outside the school . . ." (478). Although not specifically targeted at non-standard dialect speakers, the students were all basic writers, and it can be assumed that a significant number spoke non-standard dialects. And as the distance between home culture and school culture decreased, an awareness of and attention to audience

increased. The work became more purposeful and less indifferent; thus, they did more of it.

At the 1990 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Kenneth Bruffee spoke about the social experience of gaining fluency through what he termed "translation." He noted that in "foundational" (traditional) classrooms, instructors teach students how to "quack" while in non-foundational settings students learn how to "quack" and "peep." He explained that students learn to "translate" peer vernaculars as well as the jargon of academic discourse in non-foundational settings. They "redescribe unfamiliar things and people in familiar terms." This "translation" Bruffee believes leads to solidarity (Lecture).

Solidarity is what is missing from the traditional classroom, and its presence is sorely needed. For instance, Chicano students have been found to be particularly "field-sensitive"--influenced by personal relationships--and would benefit greatly from classes structured cooperatively (Ornstein 241-42). Knowing that the greatest difference between standard and non-standard dialects lies in grammatical structure and that drills are joyless and constant red ink corrections are demoralizing, grammar logs could be used. According to Linda Cleary, these allow the students to take ownership of the editing process (63). The

students log the difference between their personal grammar and standard-English grammar and note reasons for the differences. Rather than drawing attention to "errors" it points to the logic inherent in their native dialect. This increases self-esteem and fosters unity between teacher and students. And for those students whose oral tradition requires the capacity to communicate flamboyantly and interdependently, classes should contain opportunities for expression in those ways. As Geneva Smitherman notes, such students are not learning if they are passively listening (219-20).

Solidarity is not considered a necessary feature of the traditional classroom. By virtue of the "negative dependence" situations mentioned in chapter two, all students are primed to compete in order to succeed. And although the myths about self-motivation, individualism, and self-reliance, which abound in our society, harm all, these myths are particularly malevolent to non-standard dialect speakers attempting to compose in standard dialect. Such students are attempting not only to join a discourse community which is foreign to them but often also a social and cultural context which is equally foreign. They are perceived by many as the "late" entries in the race for education. Product oriented--all or nothing--composition instruction is harmful to these writers. Robert Slavin

stresses that "serious competition disrupts interpersonal bonds," (61) and without the development of bonding, these students isolate themselves, feel that they will never catch up, and often drift away from education. Mike Rose echoes these outsider-initiates' perception of their situation this way, "the diminished sense of what you can be continues to shape your identity. You live with decayed images of the possible" (105).

Are we perpetuating faulty theories in the teaching of standard English to our composition students? In making a case for the teaching of standard English, one instructor wrote, "linguistically they [black students] are still a tabula rasa waiting for the magic of the school to imbue them with the knowledge and the language that would stamp them as educated, as someone special" (Ferguson 39). Are we teaching composition in the wrong ways to these students? Thirty years ago a group of 32 social scientists urged changes in school methodology so that positive effects would occur. They stated that evidence indicates

The importance of such factors as: the absence of competition for a limited number of facilities or benefits; the possibility of contacts which permit individuals to learn about one another as individuals; and the possibility of equivalence of positions and functions. (qtd. in Slavin 67)

The traditional composition class does not address these factors positively. Are we teaching composition for the wrong reasons? To answer this question, chapter four

will briefly examine views on literacy and look at America's changing demographics.

A PERCEPTION OF LITERACY

. . . by the year 2000 one of every three Americans will be non-white. And by 2020 there will be approximately 44 million Blacks and 47 million Hispanics in the United States. (Harold L. Hodgkinson qtd. in Kazemek 261)

. . . some of our basic orientations toward the teaching and testing of literacy contribute to our inability to see. (Mike Rose 205)

As chapter one demonstrated, rhetoricians and composition teachers have, since antiquity, attempted to define and (by using their respective arts) train the "ideal" citizen. Each age has delineated the qualifications necessary to fulfill social productivity. In other words, "models of literacy instruction have always been derived from concrete historical circumstances aimed to create a particular kind of individual, in a particular social order" (de Castell 173). To the ancients, oratorical skills were paramount, while in the nineteenth century, professional skills reigned. However, while each age had its own unique challenges and the need to educate students prepared to meet those challenges, in order for progress to ensue, each age also had to develop thinkers who could imagine possibilities, forward thinkers. Unfortunately, despite this fact, in almost every generation there have been theorists and practitioners for whom "a theoretical stance became a congenial way of life" (Labov 292). The

most persistent (and harmful?) examples are those who rally around the "back to basics" slogan as the answer to illiteracy. But, "the 'back to basics' movement . . . assumes, quite incorrectly, that the 'basics' required and expected today are the same as those taught a generation or two ago" (Kintgen, Kroll, Rose xi). "Back to Basics" logic is tantamount to saying that we should teach people to look behind them to see what's in front of them. This might work if "the social conditions and educational goals remain[ed] relatively stable" (Resnick 190). But in the modern world social, economic and political changes are realized in decades rather than centuries. Therefore, in this chapter, I would like to focus upon the concept of literacy--its definitions, goals, and consequences--in light of the immediate and projected needs of non-standard dialect speakers. I hope to show that literacy, for these students, does not have to be a pill too difficult to swallow as it has been in the past.

First of all, literacy is not a static concept. It has been variously defined throughout the ages, and the criteria have changed such that "a rough progression in literacy expectation and performance" has been demonstrated (Resnick 200). While in one generation the ability to recite religious texts was considered a sign of literacy, the next required the ability to make a signature. Whereas one

generation stipulated a quantitative measure (five-year school attendance) to garner the title of literate, another used a qualitative measure (reading ability). Still more recently, not only are "literates" required to read ever more complex expository texts, but they are tested on comprehension and analytical abilities as well (Kintgen, Kroll, Rose xiv, Resnick 190). Yet there has been one constant equation regarding literacy: always a disproportionate number of illiterates are from low economic and/or minority groups--the groups with the greatest number of non-standard dialect speakers (Ogbu 227, 238). And as Jay L. Robinson notes, "A fact of life in our world is that the possession of literacy correlates almost perfectly with the possession of power and wealth" (244).

We hear a lot about "functional" literacy as the baseline criteria for reading and writing skills. But who defines "functional" and for whom? I knew a well-educated city woman who moved to the country. She purchased some laying hens so that her family could have fresh eggs in the morning. After a while, she decided that it might be nice to have some chicks as well. So, she went to the local feed store to buy a rooster. The proprietor asked her what kinds of hens she had. "Well, why does that matter?" she asked. He nonchalantly explained that if they were Bantis (a very small variety) they would need a Bantam rooster, because a

Rhode Island Red, or other large variety, would tear them apart during mating. She commented in a natural tone of voice (you know, the kind everyone can hear) that that was ridiculous, because roosters fertilize the egg after it's laid and before the shell gets completely hard. After that, all the burly men in denim coveralls became completely quiet. Only then did she realize that an old friend, not quite as well educated but long on humor, had given her false information. In that setting, the well-educated city woman was functionally illiterate.

My point is that literacy needs to be defined within the social context in which it will be used. Literacy as a construct can serve many purposes, including constraint (Kaestle 110). And church, state, and big business have retained control of the definition and dispersal of literacy for ages (Graff 88). If you doubt this, consider what Robinson says about the profession of literacy:

The profession of literacy, as contrasted with its possession, correlates not with power and wealth but with relative powerlessness and relative poverty. . . . The humanities, when compared with the sciences, the social sciences, or professional schools, are under-funded both within their own institutions and nationally, and humanists are under-represented both in academic governance and in government. (Robinson 245)

If literacy is defined as those skills necessary to congeal stratification of the social order and promote conservative ideology, then we are doing a fair job teaching

it. As Jack Goody and Ian Watt indicate, "Achievement in handling the tools of reading and writing is obviously one of the most important axes of social differentiation in modern societies . . ." (21). But if our definition of literacy is to be more humane and egalitarian and we agree with Kathleen Gough that literacy should be an "enabling factor" in the promotion of democracy (55-56), then we need to bridge the gap between the oral culture of the non-standard dialect speaker and the "literate" culture of the Standard English writer.

The system precipitates failure by constraining, invalidating, and mislabeling non-standard dialect speakers. A redefinition of literacy is necessary. For instance, an inner-city teenager who fails standardized pressured writing examinations but negotiates his/her tenuous existence with a great deal of expressive, communicative, and critical thinking skills, is not illiterate. He/she is demonstrating functional literacy from among a continuum of literacies. Failure in the school setting may well be related to the fact that the material being taught and/or the manner in which it is being taught is not socially relevant to this student.

Therefore, the goal of composition instruction for the speakers of non-standard dialects should not be the speedy change from their primarily oral culture to the Standard

Edited English of academic prose. Rather than grinding the raw material of these multifaceted students through the meat press of academia so that all who aren't broken come out shaped the same, "the mission of our schools becomes far more than assuring that we all emerge from a common melting pot" (DiPardo 51). Literacy becomes a "many-meaninged thing" (Scribner 78) defined in concert with the students. The cornerstone of this view of literacy was mentioned by Patricia Bizzell at the 1990 Conference on College Composition and Communication as "preparing students to negotiate difference in a pluralistic world" (Lecture).

If the goal of literacy is perceived as negotiation rather than capitulation, then the non-standard dialect speaker has a better chance at maintaining his/her dignity and self-confidence. With an understanding that this person comes from an oral culture, "It is thus, appropriate to spend a great deal of classroom time engaged in oral activities" (Markham 20). Ideally the class should be comprised of standard, non-standard, and ESL students. A heterogeneous mix of students, in a collaborative learning setting, affords more opportunity to learn "translation" and should make code switching less threatening to ethnic identity. Also, as Alice Roy points out, "A speaker must not only hear the speech forms of the target language but

must have both the need and the opportunity to interact with speakers of the target language" (444).

To infuse relevancy into the school setting and decrease the problem of overload in learning abstract concepts in a foreign dialect and through a different medium, teachers should encourage narration. Not only does it afford the student the opportunity to communicate in a familiar mode, but he/she can tap the resources which are most plentiful and most relevant. As Robert J. Connors states, "Learning that one has a right to speak, that one's voice and personality have validity, is an important step--an essential step. Personal writing, leaning on one's own experience is necessary for this step . . ." (181). Anne DiPardo further emphasizes that "students need a way to belong that is more than a blending in--a way, that is, of becoming a contributing part of this social dynamism, this commonwealth of learners" (45). They will be better able to contribute their reality, their version of America, through the narrative mode than through exposition until their fluency increases. Also through the collaborative workshop sessions, they will become aware of the elements of each rhetorical problem as they seek to make meaning together. Trimbur feels that the consensus that they seek to arrive at in negotiating the meaning of each text will lead to "a

heterogeneity without hierarchy" (615). Literacy will then be seen as a social achievement (Scribner 72).

The consequence of viewing literacy as a social achievement and, more specifically, the teaching of composition in this non-traditional way is unsettling to the foundationalists and those who support the status quo in education. As I mentioned in chapter two, the desire for homeostasis is a strong mechanism. Moreover Walter Ong informs us that "Knowledge is ultimately not a fractioning but a unifying phenomenon, a striving for harmony" (42). However, the status quo in education has been anything but harmonious for non-standard dialect speakers.

Are there dangers in implementing a collaborative model? The four that are mentioned by Ornstein and Levine include (1) emphasis on separation, (2) production of citizens who don't understand and act on national responsibilities, (3) second rate education, and (4) fragmentation (242). I must say that they seem to be the exact consequences which the traditional methods produce. Other than the model used at Howard, I didn't find emphasis on separation in the practitioners' accounts or in the theorist's claims. However, if my child spoke a non-standard dialect and was continuously interrupted because the teacher didn't understand our ethnically based narrative style, maybe I would opt for separation. This

miscommunication is what happens frequently when teachers do not understand dialectical differences (Sato 269-70). If the apathy of the general public in exercising their voting rights indicates lack of responsibility toward national interests, the traditional methodology is failing. However, as Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole mention, "It is a hazardous enterprise to attempt to establish causal relationships among selected aspects of social and individual function without taking into account the totality of social practice of which they are a part" (57). Yet, while a mere rhetoric of patriotism is not enough, certainly other factors besides pedagogical principles must be considered. The third danger is particularly fraught with pathos. To the American consumer, it is intolerable to even imply that the products or services being provided are second class. Yet, composition instruction has been just that for the non-standard dialect speaker in the traditional classroom. The idea that collaborative models fragment curriculum isn't reasonable either. Collaborative teaching, as a functional approach with careful assignment design, has proven to be more appropriate than a developmental approach for a number of practitioners (Cleary 62, Scribner and Cole 69).

What is truly dangerous about teaching composition to speakers of non-standard dialects is that both the students

and teacher must be proactive. But this is ultimately what should make it palatable to both. They will mutually negotiate meaning so that, in Frederick Erickson's term, "scaffolding" will occur (215). This "scaffolding" will bridge the gap between social relations and subject matter and by so doing tap Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development." Teachers will have to create writing assignments to match the needs of the students. Syllabi may need to be created after several sessions or perhaps not at all. The head of the English department cannot preordain curriculum as it is now done in some districts. Nor will curricula be "self-enclosed" (Rose 108-09). Teachers who teach in "self-enclosed" classrooms, according to Rose, don't forbid students from drawing on personal experience, but they don't actively encourage use of culturally significant material either. This is a silent invalidation and equally unhelpful for these students in their negotiations.

When composition instructors realize that being tuned-out is not the same thing as being illiterate, and when non-standard dialect speakers no longer equate immature writing skills with deficits in intellect, "scaffolding" can occur. Perhaps then what Paulo Freire says will be put into practice as well as acknowledged: "To teach, then, is the form that knowing takes as the teacher searches for the

particular way of teaching that will challenge and call forth in students their own act of knowing" (213).

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